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The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G.H Thomas

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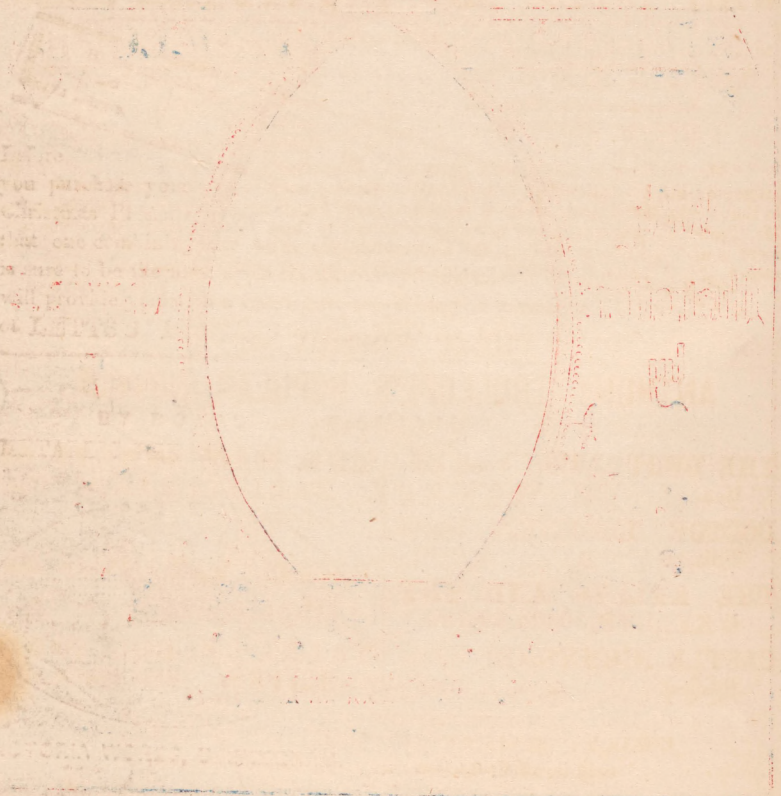

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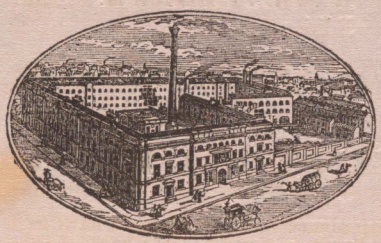

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CHAPTER IV.

THE CLERGYMAN'S HOUSE AT HOGGLESTOCK.

MRS. CRAWLEY had walked from Hogglestock to Silverbridge on the occasion of her visit to Mr. Walker, the attorney, and had been kindly sent back by that gentleman in his wife's little open carriage. The tidings she brought home with her to her husband were very grievous. The magistrates would sit on the next Thursday,—it was then Friday,—and Mr. Crawley had better appear before them to answer the charge made by Mr. Soames. He would be served with a summons, which he could obey of his own accord. There had been many points very closely discussed between Walker and Mrs. Crawley, as to which there had been great difficulty in the choice of words which should be tender enough in regard to the feelings of the poor lady, and yet strong enough to convey to her the very facts as they stood. Would Mr. Crawley come, or must a policeman be sent to fetch him? The magistrates had already issued a warrant for his apprehension. Such in truth was the fact, but they had agreed with Mr. Walker, that as there was no reasonable ground for anticipating any attempt at escape on the part of the reverend gentleman, the lawyer might use what gentle means he could for ensuring the clergyman's attendance. Could Mrs. Crawley undertake to say that he would appear? Mrs. Crawley did undertake either that her husband should appear on the Thursday, or else that she would send over in the early part of the week and declare her inability to ensure his appearance. In that case it was understood

the policeman must come. Then Mr. Walker had suggested that Mr. Crawley had better employ a lawyer. Upon this Mrs. Crawley had looked beseechingly up into Mr. Walker's face, and had asked him to undertake the duty. He was of course obliged to explain that he was already employed on the other side. Mr. Soames had secured his services, and though he was willing to do all in his power to mitigate the sufferings of the family, he could not abandon the duty he had undertaken. He named another attorney, however, and then sent the poor woman home in his wife's carriage. "I fear that unfortunate man is guilty. I fear he is," Mr. Walker had said to his wife within ten minutes of the departure of the visitor.

Mrs. Crawley would not allow herself to be driven up to the garden gate before her own house, but had left the carriage some three hundred yards off down the road, and from thence she walked home. It was now quite dark. It was nearly six in the evening on a wet December night, and although cloaks and shawls had been supplied to her, she was wet and cold when she reached her home. But at such a moment, anxious as she was to prevent the additional evil which would come to them all from illness to herself, she could not pass through to her room till she had spoken to her husband. He was sitting in the one sitting-room on the left side of the passage as the house was entered, and with him was their daughter Jane, a girl now nearly sixteen years of age. There was no light in the room, and hardly more than a spark of fire showed itself in the grate. The father was sitting on one side of the hearth, in an old arm-chair, and there he had sat for the last hour without speaking. His daughter had been in and out of the room, and had endeavoured to gain his attention now and again by a word, but he had never answered her, and had not even noticed her presence. At the moment when Mrs. Crawley's step was heard upon the gravel which led to the door, Jane was kneeling before the fire with a hand upon her father's arm. She had tried to get her hand into his, but he had either been unaware of the attempt, or had rejected it.

"Here is mamma, at last," said Jane, rising to her feet as her mother entered the house.

"Are you all in the dark?" said Mrs. Crawley, striving to speak in a voice that should not be sorrowful.

"Yes, mamma; we are in the dark. Papa is here. Oh, mamma, how wet you are!"

"Yes, dear. It is raining. Get a light out of the kitchen, Jane, and I will go upstairs in two minutes." Then, when Jane was gone,

the wife made her way in the dark over to her husband's side, and spoke a word to him. "Josiah," she said, "will you not speak to me?"

"What should I speak about? Where have you been?"

"I have been to Silverbridge. I have been to Mr. Walker. He, at any rate, is very kind."

"I don't want his kindness. I want no man's kindness. Mr. Walker is the attorney, I believe. Kind, indeed!"

"I mean considerate. Josiah, let us do the best we can in this trouble. We have had others as heavy before."

"But none to crush me as this will crush me. Well; what am I to do? Am I to go to prison—to-night?" At this moment his daughter returned with a candle, and the mother could not make her answer at once. It was a wretched, poverty-stricken room. By degrees the carpet had disappeared, which had been laid down some nine or ten years since, when they had first come to Hogglestock, and which even then had not been new. Now nothing but a poor fragment of it remained in front of the fire-place. In the middle of the room there was a table which had once been large; but one flap of it was gone altogether, and the other flap sloped grievously towards the floor, the weakness of old age having fallen into its legs. There were two or three smaller tables about, but they stood propped against walls, thence obtaining a security which their own strength would not give them. At the further end of the room there was an ancient piece of furniture, which was always called "papa's secretary," at which Mr. Crawley customarily sat and wrote his sermons, and did all work that was done by him within his house. The man who had made it, some time in the last century, had intended it to be a locked guardian for domestic documents, and the receptacle for all that was most private in the house of some paterfamilias. But beneath the hands of Mr. Crawley it always stood open; and with the exception of the small space at which he wrote, was covered with dog's-eared books, from nearly all of which the covers had disappeared. There were there two odd volumes of Euripides, a Greek Testament, an Odyssey, a duodecimo Pindar, and a miniature Anacreon. There was half a Horace,—the two first books of the Odes at the beginning, and the De Arte Poetica at the end having disappeared. There was a little bit of a volume of Cicero, and there were Cæsar's Commentaries, in two volumes, so stoutly bound that they had defied the combined ill-usage of time and the Crawley family. All these were piled upon the secretary, with many others,—odd volumes of sermons and the like; but the Greek and Latin lay at

the top, and showed signs of most frequent use. There was one arm-chair in the room,—a Windsor-chair, as such used to be called, made soft by an old cushion in the back, in which Mr. Crawley sat when both he and his wife were in the room, and Mrs. Crawley when he was absent. And there was an old horsehair sofa,—now almost denuded of its horse-hair,—but that, like the tables, required the assistance of a friendly wall. Then there was half a dozen of other chairs,—all of different sorts,—and they completed the furniture of the room. It was not such a room as one would wish to see inhabited by a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England; but they who know what money will do and what it will not, will understand how easily a man with a family, and with a hundred and thirty pounds a year, may be brought to the need of inhabiting such a chamber. When it is remembered that three pounds of meat a day, at ninepence a pound, will cost over forty pounds a year, there need be no difficulty in understanding that it may be so. Bread for such a family must cost at least twenty-five pounds. Clothes for five persons, of whom one must at any rate wear the raiment of a gentleman, can hardly be found for less than ten pounds a year a head. Then there remains fifteen pounds for tea, sugar, beer, wages, education, amusements, and the like. In such circumstances a gentleman can hardly pay much for the renewal of his furniture!

Mrs. Crawley could not answer her husband's question before her daughter, and was therefore obliged to make another excuse for again sending her out of the room. "Jane, dear," she said, "bring my things down to the kitchen and I will change them by the fire. I will be there in two minutes, when I have had a word with your papa." The girl went immediately and then Mrs. Crawley answered her husband's question. "No, my dear; there is no question of your going to prison."

"But there will be."

"I have undertaken that you shall attend before the magistrates at Silverbridge on Thursday next, at twelve o'clock. You will do that?"

"Do it! You mean, I suppose, to say that I must go there. Is anybody to come and fetch me?"

"Nobody will come. Only you must promise that you will be there. I have promised for you. You will go; will you not?" She stood leaning over him, half embracing him, waiting for an answer; but for a while he gave none. "You will tell me that you will do what I have undertaken for you, Josiah?"

"I think I would rather that they fetched me. I think that I will not go myself."

"And have policemen come for you into the parish! Mr. Walker has promised that he will send over his phaeton. He sent me home in it to-day."

"I want nobody's phaeton. If I go I will walk. If it were ten times the distance, and though I had not a shoe left to my feet I would walk. If I go there at all, of my own accord, I will walk there."

"But you will go?"

"What do I care for the parish? What matters it who sees me now? I cannot be degraded worse than I am. Everybody knows it."

"There is no disgrace without guilt," said his wife.

"Everybody thinks me guilty. I see it in their eyes. The children know of it, and I hear their whispers in the school, 'Mr. Crawley has taken some money.' I heard the girl say it myself."

"What matters what the girl says?"

"And yet you would have me go in a fine carriage to Silverbridge, as though to a wedding. If I am wanted there let them take me as they would another. I shall be here for them,—unless I am dead."

At this moment Jane reappeared, pressing her mother to take off her wet clothes, and Mrs. Crawley went with her daughter to the kitchen. The one red-armed young girl who was their only servant was sent away, and then the mother and child discussed how best they might prevail with the head of the family. "But, mamma, it must come right; must it not?"

"I trust it will. I think it will. But I cannot see my way as yet."

"Papa cannot have done anything wrong."

"No, my dear; he has done nothing wrong. He has made great mistakes, and it is hard to make people understand that he has not intentionally spoken untruths. He is ever thinking of other things, about the school, and his sermons, and he does not remember."

"And about how poor we are, mamma."

"He has much to occupy his mind, and he forgets things which dwell in the memory with other people. He said that he had got this money from Mr. Soames, and of course he thought that it was so."

"And where did he get it, mamma?"

"Ah,—I wish I knew. I should have said that I had seen every shilling that came into the house; but I know nothing of this cheque, —whence it came."

"But will not papa tell you?"

"He would tell me if he knew. He thinks it came from the dean."

"And are you sure it did not?"

"Yes; quite sure; as sure as I can be of anything. The dean

told me he would give him fifty pounds, and the fifty pounds came. I had them in my own hands. And he has written to say that it was so."

"But couldn't this be part of the fifty pounds?"

"No, dear, no."

"Then where did papa get it? Perhaps he picked it up, and has forgotten?"

To this Mrs. Crawley made no reply. The idea that the cheque had been found by her husband,—had been picked up as Jane had said,—had occurred also to Jane's mother. Mr. Soames was confident that he had dropped the pocket-book at the parsonage. Mrs. Crawley had always disliked Mr. Soames, thinking him to be hard, cruel, and vulgar. She would not have hesitated to believe him guilty of a falsehood, or even of direct dishonesty, if by so believing she could in her own mind have found the means of reconciling her husband's possession of the cheque with absolute truth on his part. But she could not do so. Even though Soames had, with devilish premeditated malice, slipped the cheque into her husband's pocket, his having done so would not account for her husband's having used the cheque when he found it there. She was driven to make excuses for him which, valid as they might be with herself, could not be valid with others. He had said that Mr. Soames had paid the cheque to him. That was clearly a mistake. He had said that the cheque had been given to him by the dean. That was clearly another mistake. She knew, or thought she knew, that he, being such as he was, might make such blunders as these, and yet be true. She believed that such statements might be blunders and not falsehoods,—so convinced was she that her husband's mind would not act at all times as do the minds of other men. But having such a conviction she was driven to believe also that almost anything might be possible. Soames may have been right, or he might have dropped, not the book, but the cheque. She had no difficulty in presuming Soames to be wrong in any detail, if by so supposing she could make the exculpation of her husband easier to herself. If villany on the part of Soames was needful to her theory, Soames would become to her a villain at once,—of the blackest dye. Might it not be possible that the cheque having thus fallen into her husband's hands, he had come, after a while, to think that it had been sent to him by his friend, the dean? And if it were so, would it be possible to make others so believe? That there was some mistake which would be easily explained were her husband's mind lucid at all points, but which she could not explain because of the darkness of his mind, she was thoroughly convinced. But were she herself to put

forward such a defence on her husband's part, she would in doing so be driven to say that he was a lunatic,—that he was incapable of managing the affairs of himself or his family. It seemed to her that she would be compelled to have him proved to be either a thief or a madman. And yet she knew that he was neither. That he was not a thief was as clear to her as the sun at noonday. Could she have lain on the man's bosom for twenty years, and not yet have learned the secrets of the heart beneath? The whole mind of the man was, as she told herself, within her grasp. He might have taken the twenty pounds; he might have taken it and spent it, though it was not his own; but yet he was no thief. Nor was he a madman. No man more sane in preaching the gospel of his Lord, in making intelligible to the ignorant the promises of his Saviour, ever got into a parish pulpit, or taught in a parish school. The intellect of the man was as clear as running water in all things not appertaining to his daily life and its difficulties. He could be logical with a vengeance,—so logical as to cause infinite trouble to his wife, who, with all her good sense, was not logical. And he had Greek at his fingers' ends,—as his daughter knew very well. And even to this day he would sometimes recite to them English poetry, lines after lines, stanzas upon stanzas, in a sweet low melancholy voice, on long winter evenings when occasionally the burden of his troubles would be lighter to him than was usual. Books in Latin and in French he read with as much ease as in English, and took delight in such as came to him, when he would condescend to accept such loans from the deanery. And there was at times a lightness of heart about the man. In the course of the last winter he had translated into Greek irregular verse the very noble ballad of Lord Bateman, maintaining the rhythm and the rhyme, and had repeated it with uncouth glee till his daughter knew it all by heart. And when there had come to him a five-pound note from some admiring magazine editor as the price of the same,—still through the dean's hands,—he had brightened up his heart and had thought for an hour or two that even yet the world would smile upon him. His wife knew well that he was not mad; but yet she knew that there were dark moments with him, in which his mind was so much astray that he could not justly be called to account as to what he might remember and what he might forget. How would it be possible to explain all this to a judge and jury, so that they might neither say that he was dishonest, nor yet that he was mad? "Perhaps he picked it up, and had forgotten," her daughter said to her. Perhaps it was so, but she might not as yet admit as much even to her child.

"It is a mystery, dear, as yet, which, with God's aid, will be

unravelled. Of one thing we at least may be sure; that your papa has not wilfully done anything wrong."

"Of course we are sure of that, mamma."

Mrs. Crawley had many troubles during the next four or five days, of which the worst, perhaps, had reference to the services of the Sunday which intervened between the day of her visit to Silverbridge, and the sitting of the magistrates. On the Saturday it was necessary that he should prepare his sermons, of which he preached two on every Sunday, though his congregation consisted only of farmers, brickmakers, and agricultural labourers, who would willingly have dispensed with the second. Mrs. Crawley proposed to send over to Mr. Robarts, a neighbouring clergyman, for the loan of a curate. Mr. Robarts was a warm friend to the Crawleys, and in such an emergency would probably have come himself; but Mr. Crawley would not hear of it. The discussion took place early on the Saturday morning, before it was as yet daylight, for the poor woman was thinking day and night of her husband's troubles, and it had this good effect, that immediately after breakfast he seated himself at his desk, and worked at his task as though he had forgotten all else in the world.

And on the Sunday morning he went into his school before the hour of the church service, as had been his wont, and taught there as though everything with him was as usual. Some of the children were absent, having heard of their teacher's tribulation, and having been told probably that he would remit his work; and for these absent ones he sent in great anger. The poor bairns came creeping in, for he was a man who by his manners had been able to secure their obedience in spite of his poverty. And he preached to the people of his parish on that Sunday, as he had always preached; eagerly, clearly, with an eloquence fitted for the hearts of such an audience. No one would have guessed from his tones and gestures and appearance on that occasion, that there was aught wrong with him,—unless there had been there some observer keen enough to perceive that the greater care which he used, and the special eagerness of his words, denoted a special frame of mind.

After that, after those church services were over, he sank again and never roused himself till the dreaded day had come.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT THE WORLD THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

Opinion in Silverbridge, at Barchester, and throughout the county, was very much divided as to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Crawley. Up to the time of Mrs. Crawley's visit to Silverbridge, the affair had not been much discussed. To give Mr. Soames his due, he had been by no means anxious to press the matter against the clergyman; but he had been forced to go on with it. While the first cheque was missing, Lord Lufton had sent him a second cheque for the money, and the loss had thus fallen upon his lordship. The cheque had of course been traced, and inquiry had of course been made as to Mr. Crawley's possession of it. When that gentleman declared that he had received it from Mr. Soames, Mr. Soames had been forced to contradict and to resent such an assertion. When Mr. Crawley had afterwards said that the money had come to him from the dean, and when the dean had shown that this also was untrue, Mr. Soames, confident as he was that he had dropped the pocket-book at Mr. Crawley's house, could not but continue the investigation. He had done so with as much silence as the nature of the work admitted. But by the day of the magistrates' meeting at Silverbridge the subject had become common through the county, and men's minds were very much divided.

All Hogglestock believed their parson to be innocent; but then all Hogglestock believed him to be mad. At Silverbridge the tradesmen with whom he had dealt, and to whom he had owed, and still owed, money, all declared him to be innocent. They knew something of the man personally, and could not believe him to be a thief. All the ladies in Silverbridge, too, were sure of his innocence. It was to them impossible that such a man should have stolen twenty pounds. "My dear," said the eldest Miss Prettyman to poor Grace Crawley, "in England, where the laws are good, no gentleman is ever made out to be guilty when he is innocent; and your papa, of course, is innocent. Therefore you should not trouble yourself." "It will break papa's heart," Grace had said, and she did trouble herself. But the gentlemen in Silverbridge were made of sterner stuff, and believed the man to be guilty, clergyman and gentleman though he was. Mr. Walker, who among the lights in Silverbridge was the leading light, would not speak a word

upon the subject to anybody; and then everybody, who was anybody, knew that Mr. Walker was convinced of the man's guilt. Had Mr. Walker believed him to be innocent, his tongue would have been ready enough. John Walker, who was in the habit of laughing at his father's good nature, had no doubt upon the subject. Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Walker's partner, shook his head. People did not think much of Mr. Winthrop, excepting certain unmarried ladies; for Mr. Winthrop was a bachelor, and had plenty of money. People did not think much of Mr. Winthrop; but still on this subject he might know something, and when he shook his head he manifestly intended to indicate guilt. And Dr. Tempest, the rector of Silverbridge, did not hesitate to declare his belief in the guilt of the incumbent of Hogglestock. No man reverences a clergyman, as a clergyman, so slightly as a brother clergyman. To Dr. Tempest it appeared to be neither very strange nor very terrible that Mr. Crawley should have stolen twenty pounds. "What is a man to do," he said, "when he sees his children starving? He should not have married on such a preferment as that." Mr. Crawley had married, however, long before he got the living of Hogglestock.

There were two Lady Luftons,—mother-in-law and daughter-in-law,—who at this time were living together at Framley Hall, Lord Lufton's seat in the county of Barset, and they were both thoroughly convinced of Mr. Crawley's innocence. The elder lady had lived much among clergymen, and could hardly, I think, by any means have been brought to believe in the guilt of any man who had taken upon himself the orders of the Church of England. She had also known Mr. Crawley personally for some years, and was one of those who could not admit to herself that any one was vile who had been near to herself. She believed intensely in the wickedness of the outside world, of the world which was far away from herself, and of which she never saw anything; but they who were near to her, and who had even become dear to her, or who even had been respected by her, were made, as it were, saints in her imagination. They were brought into the inner circle, and could hardly be expelled. She was an old woman who thought all evil of those she did not know, and all good of those whom she did know; and as she did know Mr. Crawley, she was quite sure he had not stolen Mr. Soames's twenty pounds. She did know Mr. Soames also; and thus there was a mystery for the unravelling of which she was very anxious. And the young Lady Lufton was equally sure, and perhaps with better reason for such certainty. She had, in truth, known more of Mr. Crawley personally, than had any one in the county, unless it was the dean. The younger Lady Lufton, the present Lord Lufton's wife, had sojourned at

one time in Mr. Crawley's house, amidst the Crawley poverty, living as they lived, and nursing Mrs. Crawley through an illness which had well nigh been fatal to her; and the younger Lady Lufton believed in Mr. Crawley,—as Mr. Crawley also believed in her.

"It is quite impossible, my dear," the old woman said to her daughter-in-law.

"Quite impossible, my lady." The dowager was always called "my lady," both by her own daughter and by her son's wife, except in the presence of their children, when she was addressed as "grandmamma." "Think how well I knew him. It's no use talking of evidence. No evidence would make me believe it."

"Nor me; and I think it a great shame that such a report should be spread about."

"I suppose Mr. Soames could not help himself?" said the younger lady, who was not herself very fond of Mr. Soames.

"Ludovic says that he has only done what he was obliged to do." The Ludovic spoken of was Lord Lufton.

This took place in the morning, but in the evening the affair was again discussed at Framley Hall. Indeed, for some days, there was hardly any other subject held to be worthy of discussion in the county. Mr. Robarts, the clergyman of the parish and the brother of the younger Lady Lufton, was dining at the hall with his wife, and the three ladies had together expressed their perfect conviction of the falseness of the accusation. But when Lord Lufton and Mr. Robarts were together after the ladies had left them there was much less of this certainty expressed. "By Jove," said Lord Lufton, "I don't know what to think of it. I wish with all my heart that Soames had said nothing about it, and that the cheque had passed without remark."

"That was impossible. When the banker sent to Soames, he was obliged to take the matter up."

"Of course he was. But I'm sorry that it was so. For the life of me I can't conceive how the cheque got into Crawley's hands."

"I imagine that it had been lying in the house, and that Crawley had come to think that it was his own."

"But, my dear Mark," said Lord Lufton, "excuse me if I say that that's nonsense. What do we do when a poor man has come to think that another man's property is his own? We send him to prison for making the mistake."

"I hope they won't send Crawley to prison."

"I hope so too; but what is a jury to do?"

"You think it will go to a jury, then?"

"I do," said Lord Lufton. "I don't see how the magistrates can save themselves from committing him. It is one of those cases in which every one concerned would wish to drop it if it were only possible. But it is not possible. On the evidence, as one sees it at present, one is bound to say that it is a case for a jury."

"I believe that he is mad," said the brother parson.

"He always was, as far as I could learn," said the lord. "I never knew him, myself. You do, I think?"

"Oh, yes. I know him." And the vicar of Framley became silent and thoughtful as the memory of a certain interview between himself and Mr. Crawley came back upon his mind. At that time the waters had nearly closed over his head and Mr. Crawley had given him some assistance. When the gentlemen had again found the ladies, they kept their own doubts to themselves; for at Framley Hall, as at present tenanted, female voices and female influences predominated over those which came from the other sex.

At Barchester, the cathedral city of the county in which the Crawleys lived, opinion was violently against Mr. Crawley. In the city Mrs. Proudie, the wife of the bishop, was the leader of opinion in general, and she was very strong in her belief of the man's guilt. She had known much of clergymen all her life, as it behoved a bishop's wife to do, and she had none of that mingled weakness and ignorance which taught so many ladies in Barsetshire to suppose that an ordained clergyman could not become a thief. She hated old Lady Lufton with all her heart, and old Lady Lufton hated her as warmly. Mrs. Proudie would say frequently that Lady Lufton was a conceited old idiot, and Lady Lufton would declare as frequently that Mrs. Proudie was a vulgar virago. It was known at the palace in Barchester, that kindness had been shown to the Crawleys by the family at Framley Hall, and this alone would have been sufficient to make Mrs. Proudie believe that Mr. Crawley could have been guilty of any crime. And as Mrs. Proudie believed, so did the bishop believe. "It is a terrible disgrace to the diocese," said the bishop, shaking his head, and patting his apron as he sat by his study fire.

"Fiddlestick!" said Mrs. Proudie.

"But, my dear,—a beneficed clergyman!"

"You must get rid of him; that's all. You must be firm whether he be acquitted or convicted."

"But if he be acquitted, I cannot get rid of him, my dear."

"Yes, you can, if you are firm. And you must be firm. Is it not true that he has been disgracefully involved in debt ever since he has

been there; that you have been pestered by letters from unfortunate tradesmen who cannot get their money from him?"

"That is true, my dear, certainly."

"And is that kind of thing to go on? He cannot come to the palace as all clergymen should do, because he has got no clothes to come in. I saw him once about the lanes, and I never set my eyes on such an object in my life! I would not believe that the man was a clergyman till John told me. He is a disgrace to the diocese, and he must be got rid of. I feel sure of his guilt, and I hope he will be convicted. One is bound to hope that a guilty man should be convicted. But if he escape conviction, you must sequestrate the living because of the debts. The income is enough to get an excellent curate. It would just do for Thumble." To all of which the bishop made no further reply, but simply nodded his head and patted his apron. He knew that he could not do exactly what his wife required of him; but if it should so turn out that poor Crawley was found to be guilty, then the matter would be comparatively easy.

"It should be an example to us, that we should look to our own steps, my dear," said the bishop.

"That's all very well," said Mrs. Proudie, "but it has become your duty, and mine too, to look to the steps of other people; and that duty we must do."

"Of course, my dear; of course." That was the tone in which the question of Mr. Crawley's alleged guilt was discussed at the palace.

We have already heard what was said on the subject at the house of Archdeacon Grantly. As the days passed by, and as other tidings came in, confirmatory of those which had before reached him, the archdeacon felt himself unable not to believe in the man's guilt. And the fear which he entertained as to his son's intended marriage with Grace Crawley, tended to increase the strength of his belief. Dr. Grantly had been a very successful man in the world, and on all ordinary occasions had been able to show that bold front with which success endows a man. But he still had his moments of weakness, and feared greatly lest anything of misfortune should touch him, and mar the comely roundness of his prosperity. He was very wealthy. The wife of his bosom had been to him all that a wife should be. His reputation in the clerical world stood very high. He had lived all his life on terms of equality with the best of the gentry around him. His only daughter had made a splendid marriage. His two sons had hitherto done well in the world, not only as regarded their happiness, but as to marriage also, and as to social standing. But how great would be the fall if his

son should at last marry the daughter of a convicted thief! How would the Proudies rejoice over him,—the Proudies who had been crushed to the ground by the success of the Hartletop alliance; and how would the low-church curates who swarmed in Barsetshire, gather together and scream in delight over his dismay! "But why should we say that he is guilty?" said Mrs. Grantly.

"It hardly matters as far as we are concerned, whether they find him guilty or not," said the archdeacon; "if Henry marries that girl my heart will be broken."

But perhaps to no one except to the Crawleys themselves had the matter caused so much terrible anxiety as to the archdeacon's son. He had told his father that he had made no offer of marriage to Grace Crawley, and he had told the truth. But there are perhaps few men who make such offers in direct terms without having already said and done that which make such offers simply necessary as the final closing of an accepted bargain. It was so at any rate between Major Grantly and Miss Crawley, and Major Grantly acknowledged to himself that it was so. He acknowledged also to himself that as regarded Grace herself he had no wish to go back from his implied intentions. Nothing that either his father or mother might say would shake him in that. But could it be his duty to bind himself to the family of a convicted thief? Could it be right that he should disgrace his father and his mother and his sister and his one child by such a connection? He had a man's heart, and the poverty of the Crawleys caused him no solicitude. But he shrank from the contamination of a prison.

CHAPTER VI.

GRACE CRAWLEY.

It has already been said that Grace Crawley was at this time living with the two Miss Prettymans, who kept a girls' school at Silverbridge. Two more benignant ladies than the Miss Prettymans never presided over such an establishment. The younger was fat, and fresh, and fair, and seemed to be always running over with the milk of human kindness. The other was very thin and very small, and somewhat afflicted with bad health ;—was weak, too, in the eyes, and subject to racking headaches, so that it was considered generally that she was unable to take much active part in the education of the pupils. But it was considered as generally that she did all the thinking, that she knew more than any other woman in Barsetshire, and that all the Prettyman schemes for education emanated from her mind. It was said, too, by those who knew them best, that her sister's good-nature was as nothing to hers ; that she was the most charitable, the most loving, and the most conscientious of schoolmistresses. This was Miss Annabella Prettyman, the elder ; and perhaps it may be inferred that some portion of her great character for virtue may have been due to the fact that nobody ever saw her out of her own house. She could not even go to church, because the open air brought on neuralgia. She was therefore perhaps taken to be magnificent, partly because she was unknown. Miss Anne Prettyman, the younger, went about frequently to tea-parties,—would go, indeed, to any party to which she might be invited ; and was known to have a pleasant taste for pound-cake and sweetmeats. Being seen so much in the outer world, she became common, and her character did not stand so high as did that of her sister. Some people were ill-natured enough to say that she wanted to marry Mr. Winthrop ; but of what maiden lady that goes out into the world are not such stories told ? And all such stories in Silverbridge were told with special reference to Mr. Winthrop.

Miss Crawley, at present, lived with the Miss Prettymans, and assisted them in the school. This arrangement had been going on for the last twelve months, since the time in which Grace would have left the school in the natural course of things. There had been no bargain made, and no intention that Grace should stay. She had been invited

to fill the place of an absent superintendent, first for one month, then for another, and then for two more months; and when the assistant came back, the Miss Prettymans thought there were reasons why Grace should be asked to remain a little longer. But they took great care to let the fashionable world of Silverbridge know that Grace Crawley was a visitor with them, and not a teacher. "We pay her no salary, or anything of that kind," said Miss Anne Prettyman; a statement, however, which was by no means true, for during those four months the regular stipend had been paid to her; and twice since then, Miss Annabella Prettyman, who managed all the money matters, had called Grace into her little room, and had made a little speech, and had put a little bit of paper into her hand. "I know I ought not to take it," Grace had said to her friend Anne. "If I was not here, there would be no one in my place." "Nonsense, my dear," Anne Prettyman had said; "it is the greatest comfort to us in the world. And you should make yourself nice, you know, for his sake. All the gentlemen like it." Then Grace had been very angry, and had sworn that she would give the money back again. Nevertheless, I think she did make herself as nice as she knew how to do. And from all this it may be seen that the Miss Prettymans had hitherto quite approved of Major Grantly's attentions.

But when this terrible affair came on about the cheque which had been lost and found and traced to Mr. Crawley's hands, Miss Anne Prettyman said nothing further to Grace Crawley about Major Grantly. It was not that she thought that Mr. Crawley was guilty, but she knew enough of the world to be aware that suspicion of such guilt might compel such a man as Major Grantly to change his mind. "If he had only popped," Anne said to her sister, "it would have been all right. He would never have gone back from his word." "My dear," said Annabella, "I wish you would not talk about popping. It is a terrible word." "I shouldn't, to any one except you," said Anne.

There had come to Silverbridge some few months since, on a visit to Mrs. Walker, a young lady from Allington, in the neighbouring county, between whom and Grace Crawley there had grown up from circumstances a warm friendship. Grace had a cousin in London,—a clerk high up and well-to-do in a public office, a nephew of her mother's,—and this cousin was, and for years had been, violently smitten in love for this young lady. But the young lady's tale had been sad, and though she acknowledged feelings of most affectionate friendship for the cousin, she could not bring herself to acknowledge more. Grace Crawley had met the young lady at Silverbridge, and words had been

spoken about the cousin; and though the young lady from Allington was some years older than Grace, there had grown up to be a friendship, and, as is not uncommon between young ladies, there had been an agreement that they would correspond. The name of the lady was Miss Lily Dale, and the name of the well-to-do cousin in London was Mr. John Eames.

At the present moment Miss Dale was at home with her mother at Allington, and Grace Crawley in her terrible sorrow wrote to her friend, pouring out her whole heart. As Grace's letter and Miss Dale's answer will assist us in our story, I will venture to give them both.

"DEAREST LILY, "Silverbridge, —— December, 186—.

"I HARDLY know how to tell you what has happened, it is so very terrible. But perhaps you will have heard it already, as everybody is talking of it here. It has got into the newspapers, and therefore it cannot be kept secret. Not that I should keep anything from you; only this is so very dreadful that I hardly know how to write it. Somebody says,—a Mr. Soames, I believe it is,—that papa has taken some money that does not belong to him, and he is to be brought before the magistrates and tried. Of course, papa has done nothing wrong. I do think he would be the last man in the world to take a penny that did not belong to him. You know how poor he is; what a life he has had! But I think he would almost sooner see mamma starving;—I am sure he would rather be starved himself, than even borrow a shilling which he could not pay. To suppose that he would take money" (she had tried to write the word "steal," but she could not bring her pen to form the letters) "is monstrous. But, somehow, the circumstances have been made to look bad against him, and they say that he must come over here to the magistrates. I often think that of all men in the world papa is the most unfortunate. Everything seems to go against him, and yet he is so good! Poor mamma has been over here, and she is distracted. I never saw her so wretched before. She had been to your friend, Mr. Walker, and came to me afterwards for a minute. Mr. Walker has got something to do with it, though mamma says she thinks he is quite friendly to papa. I wonder whether you could find out, through Mr. Walker, what he thinks about it. Of course, mamma knows that papa has done nothing wrong; but she says that the whole thing is most mysterious, and that she does not know how to account for the money. Papa, you know, is not like other people. He forgets things; and is always thinking, thinking, thinking of his great misfortunes. Poor papa! My heart bleeds so

when I remember all his sorrows, that I hate myself for thinking about myself.

"When mamma left me,—and it was then I first knew that papa would really have to be tried,—I went to Miss Annabella, and told her that I would go home. She asked me why, and I said I would not disgrace her house by staying in it. She got up and took me in her arms, and there came a tear out of both her dear old eyes, and she said that if anything evil came to papa,—which she would not believe, as she knew him to be a good man,—there should be a home in her house not only for me, but for mamma and Jane. Isn't she a wonderful woman? When I think of her, I sometimes think that she must be an angel already. Then she became very serious,—for just before, through her tears, she had tried to smile,—and she told me to remember that all people could not be like her, who had nobody to look to but herself and her sister; and that at present I must task myself not to think of that which I had been thinking of before. She did not mention anybody's name, but of course I understood very well what she meant; and I suppose she is right. I said nothing in answer to her, for I could not speak. She was holding my hand, and I took hers up and kissed it, to show her, if I could, that I knew that she was right; but I could not have spoken about it for all the world. It was not ten days since that she herself, with all her prudence, told me that she thought I ought to make up my mind what answer I would give him. And then I did not say anything; but of course she knew. And after that Miss Anne spoke quite freely about it, so that I had to beg her to be silent even before the girls. You know how imprudent she is. But it is all over now. Of course Miss Annabella is right. He has got a great many people to think of; his father and mother, and his darling little Edith, whom he brought here twice, and left her with us once for two days, so that she got to know me quite well; and I took such a love for her, that I could not bear to part with her. But I think sometimes that all our family are born to be unfortunate, and then I tell myself that I will never hope for anything again.

"Pray write to me soon. I feel as though nothing on earth could comfort me, and yet I shall like to have your letter. Dear, dear Lily, I am not even yet so wretched but what I shall rejoice to be told good news of you. If it only could be as John wishes it! And why should it not? It seems to me that nobody has a right or a reason to be unhappy except us. Good-by, dearest Lily,

"Your affectionate friend,

"Grace Crawley."

"P.S.—I think I have made up my mind that I will go back to Hogglestock at once if the magistrates decide against papa. I think I should be doing the school harm if I were to stay here."

The answer to this letter did not reach Miss Crawley till after the magistrates' meeting on the Thursday, but it will be better for our story that it should be given here than postponed until the result of that meeting shall have been told. Miss Dale's answer was as follows:—

"Allington, —— December, 186—.

DEAR GRACE,

"YOUR letter has made me very unhappy. If it can at all comfort you to know that mamma and I sympathize with you altogether, in that you may at any rate be sure. But in such troubles nothing will give comfort. They must be borne, till the fire of misfortune burns itself out.

"I had heard about the affair a day or two before I got your note. Our clergyman, Mr. Boyce, told us of it. Of course we all know that the charge must be altogether unfounded, and mamma says that the truth will be sure to show itself at last. But that conviction does not cure the evil, and I can well understand that your father should suffer grievously; and I pity your mother quite as much as I do him.

"As for Major Grantly, if he be such a man as I took him to be from the little I saw of him, all this would make no difference to him. I am sure that it ought to make none. Whether it should not make a difference in you is another question. I think it should; and I think your answer to him should be that you could not even consider any such proposition while your father was in so great trouble. I am so much older than you, and seem to have had so much experience, that I do not scruple, as you will see, to come down upon you with all the weight of my wisdom.

"About that other subject I had rather say nothing. I have known your cousin all my life, almost; and I regard no one more kindly than I do him. When I think of my friends, he is always one of the dearest. But when one thinks of going beyond friendship, even if one tries to do so, there are so many barriers!

"Your affectionate friend,

"LILY DALE.

"Mamma bids me say that she would be delighted to have you here whenever it might suit you to come; and I add to this message my entreaty that you will come at once. You say that you think you ought to leave Miss Prettyman's for a while. I can well understand

your feeling; but as your sister is with your mother, surely you had better come to us,—I mean quite at once. I will not scruple to tell you what mamma says, because I know your good sense. She says that as the interest of the school may possibly be concerned, and as you have no regular engagement, she thinks you ought to leave Silverbridge; but she says that it will be better that you come to us than that you should go home. If you went home, people might say that you had left in some sort of disgrace. Come to us, and when all this has been put right, then you go back to Silverbridge; and then, if a certain person speaks again, you can make a different answer. Mamma quite understands that you are to come; so you have only got to ask your own mamma, and come at once."

This letter, as the reader will understand, did not reach Grace Crawley till after the all-important Thursday; but before that day had come round, Grace had told Miss Prettyman,—had told both the Miss Prettymans—that she was resolved to leave them. She had done this without even consulting her mother, driven to it by various motives. She knew that her father's conduct was being discussed by the girls in the school, and that things were said of him which it could not but be for the disadvantage of Miss Prettyman that any one should say of a teacher in her establishment. She felt, too, that she could not hold up her head in Silverbridge in these days, as it would become her to do if she retained her position. She did struggle gallantly, and succeeded much more nearly than she was herself aware. She was all but able to carry herself as though no terrible accusation was being made against her father. Of the struggle, however, she was not herself the less conscious, and she told herself that on that account also she must go. And then she must go also because of Major Grantly. Whether he was minded to come and speak to her that one other needed word, or whether he was not so minded, it would be better that she should be away from Silverbridge. If he spoke it she could only answer him by a negative; and if he were minded not to speak it, would it not be better that she should leave herself the power of thinking that his silence had been caused by her absence, and not by his coldness or indifference?

She asked, therefore, for an interview with Miss Prettyman, and was shown into the elder sister's room, at eleven o'clock on the Tuesday morning. The elder Miss Prettyman never came into the school herself till twelve, but was in the habit of having interviews with the young ladies,—which were sometimes very awful in their nature,—for the two previous hours. During these interviews an immense amount of

business was done, and the fortunes in life of some girls were said to have been there made or marred; as when, for instance, Miss Crimpton had been advised to stay at home with her uncle in England, instead of going out with her sisters to India, both of which sisters were married within three months of their landing at Bombay. The way in which she gave her counsel on such occasions was very efficacious. No one knew better than Miss Prettyman that a cock can crow most effectively in his own farmyard, and therefore all crowing intended to be effective was done by her within the shrine of her own peculiar room.

"Well, my dear, what is it?" she said to Grace. "Sit in the arm-chair, my dear, and we can then talk comfortably." The teachers, when they were closeted with Miss Prettyman, were always asked to sit in the arm-chair, whereas a small, straight-backed, uneasy chair was kept for the use of the young ladies. And there was, too, a stool of repentance, out against the wall, very uncomfortable indeed for young ladies who had not behaved themselves so prettily as young ladies generally do.

Grace seated herself, and then began her speech very quickly. "Miss Prettyman," she said, "I have made up my mind that I will go home, if you please."

"And why should you go home, Grace? Did I not tell you that you should have a home here?" Miss Prettyman had weak eyes, and was very small, and had never possessed any claim to be called good-looking. And she assumed nothing of majestical awe from any adornment or studied amplification of the outward woman by means of impressive trappings. The possessor of an unobservant eye might have called her a mean-looking, little old woman. And certainly there would have been nothing awful in her to any one who came across her otherwise than as a lady having authority in her own school. But within her own precincts, she did know how to surround herself with a dignity which all felt who approached her there. Grace Crawley, as she heard the simple question which Miss Prettyman had asked, unconsciously acknowledged the strength of the woman's manner. She already stood rebuked for having proposed a plan so ungracious, so unnecessary, and so unwise.

"I think I ought to be with mamma at present," said Grace.

"Your mother has your sister with her."

"Yes, Miss Prettyman; Jane is there."

"If there be no other reason, I cannot think that that can be held to be a reason now. Of course your mother would like to have you always; unless you should be married,—but then there are reasons why this should not be so."

"Of course there are."

"I do not think,—that is, if I know all that there is to be known,—I do not think, I say, that there can be any good ground for your leaving us now,—just now."

Then Grace sat silent for a moment, gathering her courage, and collecting her words; and after that she spoke. "It is because of papa, and because of this charge ——"

"But, Grace ——"

"I know what you are going to say, Miss Prettyman;—that is, I think I know."

"If you will hear me, you may be sure that you know."

"But I want you to hear me for one moment first. I beg your pardon, Miss Prettyman; I do indeed, but I want to say this before you go on. I must go home, and I know I ought. We are all disgraced, and I won't stop here to disgrace the school. I know papa has done nothing wrong; but nevertheless we are disgraced. The police are to bring him in here on Thursday, and everybody in Silverbridge will know it. It cannot be right that I should be here teaching in the school, while it is all going on;—and I won't. And, Miss Prettyman, I couldn't do it,—indeed I couldn't. I can't bring myself to think of anything I am doing. Indeed I can't; and then, Miss Prettyman, there are other reasons." By the time that she had proceeded thus far, Grace Crawley's words were nearly choked by her tears.

"And what are the other reasons, Grace?"

"I don't know," said Grace, struggling to speak through her tears.

"But I know," said Miss Prettyman. "I know them all. I know all your reasons, and I tell you that in my opinion you ought to remain where you are, and not go away. The very reasons which to you are reasons for your going, to me are reasons for your remaining here."

"I can't remain. I am determined to go. I don't mind you and Miss Anne, but I can't bear to have the girls looking at me,—and the servants."

Then Miss Prettyman paused awhile, thinking what words of wisdom would be most appropriate in the present conjuncture. But words of wisdom did not seem to come easily to her, having for the moment been banished by tenderness of heart. "Come here, my love," she said at last. "Come here, Grace." Slowly Grace got up from her seat and came round, and stood by Miss Prettyman's elbow. Miss Prettyman pushed her chair a little back, and pushed herself a little forward, and stretching out one hand, placed her arm round Grace's

waist, and with the other took hold of Grace's hand, and thus drew her down and kissed the girl's forehead and lips. And then Grace found herself kneeling at her friend's feet. "Grace," she said, "do you not know that I love you? Do you not know that I love you dearly?" In answer to this, Grace kissed the withered hand she held in hers, while the warm tears trickled down upon Miss Prettyman's knuckles. "I love you as though you were my own," exclaimed the schoolmistress; "and will you not trust me, that I know what is best for you?"

"I must go home," said Grace.

"Of course you shall, if you think it right at last; but let us talk of it. No one in this house, you know, has the slightest suspicion that your father has done anything that is in the least dishonourable."

"I know that you have not."

"No, nor has Anne." Miss Prettyman said this as though no one in that house beyond herself and her sister had a right to have any opinion on any subject.

"I know that," said Grace.

"Well, my dear. If we think so ——"

"But the servants, Miss Prettyman?"

"If any servant in this house says a word to offend you, I'll—I'll ——"

"They don't say anything, Miss Prettyman, but they look. Indeed I'd better go home. Indeed I had!"

"Do not you think your mother has cares enough upon her, and burden enough, without having another mouth to feed, and another head to shelter. You haven't thought of that, Grace!"

"Yes, I have."

"And as for the work, whilst you are not quite well you shall not be troubled with teaching. I have some old papers that want copying and settling, and you shall sit here and do that just for an employment. Anne knows that I've long wanted to have it done, and I'll tell her that you've kindly promised to do it for me."

"No; no; no," said Grace; "I must go home." She was still kneeling at Miss Prettyman's knee, and still holding Miss Prettyman's hand. And then, at that moment, there came a tap at the door, gentle but yet not humble, a tap which acknowledged, on the part of the tapper, the supremacy in that room of the lady who was sitting there, but which still claimed admittance almost as a right. The tap was well known by both of them to be the tap of Miss Anne. Grace immediately jumped up, and Miss Prettyman settled herself in her

chair with a motion which almost seemed to indicate some feeling of shame as to her late position.

"I suppose I may come in?" said Miss Anne, opening the door and inserting her head.

"Yes, you may come in,—if you have anything to say," said Miss Prettyman, with an air which seemed to be intended to assert her supremacy. But, in truth, she was simply collecting the wisdom and dignity which had been somewhat dissipated by her tenderness.

"I did not know that Grace Crawley was here," said Miss Anne.

"Grace Crawley is here," said Miss Prettyman.

"What is the matter, Grace?" said Miss Anne, seeing the tears.

"Never mind now," said Miss Prettyman.

"Poor dear, I'm sure I'm sorry as though she were my own sister," said Anne. "But, Annabella, I want to speak to you especially."

"To me, in private?"

"Yes, to you; in private, if Grace won't mind?"

Then Grace prepared to go. But as she was going, Miss Anne, upon whose brow a heavy burden of thought was lying, stopped her suddenly. "Grace, my dear," she said, "go upstairs into your room, will you?—not across the hall to the school."

"And why shouldn't she go to the school?" said Miss Prettyman.

Miss Anne paused a moment, and then answered,—unwillingly, as though driven to make a reply which she knew to be indiscreet. "Because there is somebody in the hall."

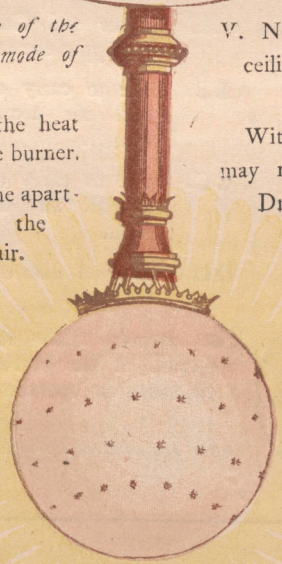
"Go to your room, dear," said Miss Prettyman. And Grace went to her room, never turning an eye down towards the hall. "Who is it?" said Miss Prettyman.

"Major Grantly is here, asking to see you," said Miss Anne.

GAS

WITHOUT HEAT SMOKE OR SMELL

Rickets's Ventilating GLOBE-LIGHTS



The following are some of the advantages of this mode of Lighting:—

I. It carries off all the heat and foul air from the burner.

II. It also ventilates the apartment by removing the heated and vitiated air.

III. It introduces a constant supply of external fresh air.

IV. The flame is powerful and steady, and cannot be affected by draughts.

V. No smoke escaping—the ceiling is not blackened.

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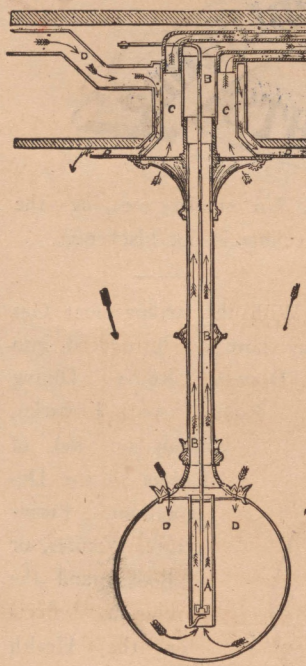

DESCRIPTION.

A. Burner and Gas Pipe to supply the same.

BB. Pipe to carry off the foul air from the burner.

CC. Pipe to carry off the heated air of the room.

DD. Inlet for cold external fresh air.

The arrows show the direction of the currents of air when in operation.

(See Illustration on other side.)

In large rooms, where the centre light is insufficient, BRACKET LIGHTS are used, the pipes for the removal of the foul air being chased into the wall, and entirely concealed from view.

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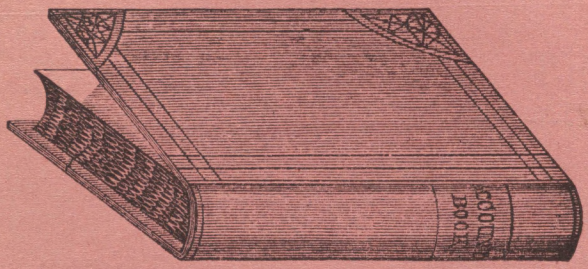

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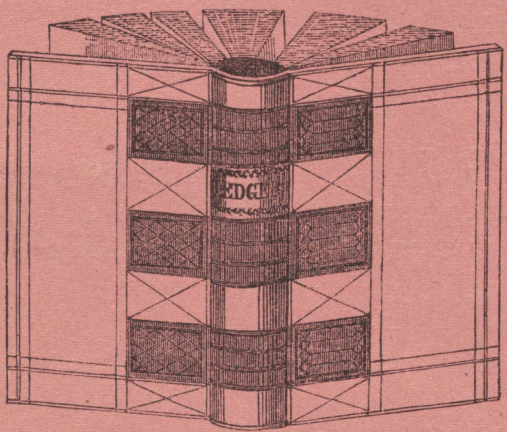

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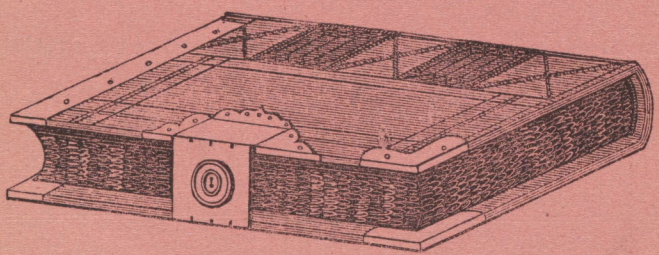

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